

What is claimed is:

1. A laryngeal mask airway device, comprising:
 - A. an inflatable cuff, the cuff defining a central opening at least when inflated, the cuff being insertable through a mouth of a patient to an inserted location within the patient, the cuff surrounding a glottic opening of the patient when inflated and at the inserted location;
 - B. an airway tube extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the airway tube defining an internal passage, a sealed airway passage extending from the proximal end of the tube through the internal passage to the glottic opening when the cuff is inflated and at the inserted location; and
 - C. a tab fixed to the airway tube near the proximal end of the airway tube, the tab being disposed outside of the mouth of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location, the tab extending outwardly from the airway tube in a first direction when the cuff is at the inserted location, a second direction being perpendicular to a line extending from a nose of the patient to a chin of the patient, the first direction being transverse to the second direction.

2. A device according to claim 1, the first direction extending from the patient's chin towards the patient's nose.

3. A device according to claim 2, the tab defining two straight side edges and a top edge, the side edges defining lines that intersect at a vertex, the top edge being between the vertex and the patient's nose when the cuff is at the inserted location.

4. A device according to claim 1, the first direction extending from the patient's nose towards the patient's chin.

5. A device according to claim 4, the tab defining two straight side edges and a bottom edge, the side edges defining lines that intersect at a vertex, the bottom edge being between the vertex and a foot of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location.

6. A device according to claim 1, the tab being disposed near an upper lip of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location.

7. A device according to claim 6, the tab extending from the airway tube towards a nose of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location.

8. A device according to claim 7, the tab including a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the tab extending outwardly from the airway tube, the second portion extending from the first portion at an angle with respect to the first portion, the angle being different than one hundred eighty degrees.

9. A device according to claim 7, the airway tube including a connector portion and a second portion, the connector portion including a proximal portion, a distal portion, and a flange, the flange being disposed between the proximal and distal portions, the distal portion being inserted into a proximal end of the second portion, the proximal portion being cylindrical.

10. A device according to claim 9, the flange defining the tab.

11. A device according to claim 1, the tab being configured to permit application of adhesive tape to the tab and a face of the patient such that the tape, when applied, biases the tab towards the mouth of the patient.

12. A device according to claim 11, the tab being configured to permit application of adhesive tape to the tab, a left cheek, and a right cheek of the patient.

13. A device according to claim 11, the adhesive tape, when applied, biasing a distal end of the device against an esophageal sphincter of the patient.

14. A device according to claim 1, the tab extending from the airway tube for at least fifteen millimeters.

15. A device according to claim 14, the tab extending from the airway tube for fifteen millimeters.

16. A device according to claim 1, the tab including a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the tab extending outwardly from the airway tube, the second portion extending from the first portion at an angle with respect to the first portion, the angle being different than one hundred eighty degrees.

17. A device according to claim 1, the tab being substantially rigid.

18. A device according to claim 1, a cross section of the airway tube being oblong.

19. A device according to claim 1, the device further including an epiglottis support flange.

20. A device according to claim 1, the cuff defining an inner perimeter that bounds the central opening, the device further including an epiglottis support flange, the flange defining an outer perimeter and an inner perimeter, the outer perimeter of the flange being fixed to the inner perimeter of the cuff, the inner perimeter of the flange defining a second opening, the second opening being smaller than the central opening.

21. A laryngeal mask airway device, comprising:

A. an inflatable cuff, the cuff defining a central opening at least when inflated, the cuff being insertable through a mouth of a patient to an inserted location within the patient, the cuff surrounding a glottic opening of the patient when inflated and at the inserted location; and

B. an airway tube extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the airway tube including a tube wall that defines an internal passage, a sealed airway passage extending from the proximal end of the tube through the internal passage to the glottic opening when the cuff is inflated and at the inserted location, the airway tube defining a

tab, the tab being disposed outside of the mouth of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location, the tab extending outwardly from the tube wall in a first direction when the cuff is at the inserted location, a second direction being perpendicular to a line extending from a nose of the patient to a chin of the patient, the first direction being transverse to the second direction.

22. A device according to claim 21, the tab extending from the tube wall in the first direction sufficiently far to permit application of adhesive tape to the tab and to a head of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location such that the adhesive tape, when applied, biases the tab towards the head of the patient.

23. A method of providing ventilation to a patient, comprising:

A. providing a laryngeal mask airway device, comprising:

(i) an inflatable cuff, the cuff defining a central opening at least when inflated, the cuff being insertable through a mouth of a patient to an inserted location within the patient, the cuff surrounding a glottic opening of the patient when inflated and at the inserted location; and

(ii) an airway tube extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the airway tube having a tube wall that defines an internal passage, a sealed airway passage extending from the proximal end of the tube through the internal passage to the glottic opening when the cuff is inflated and at the inserted location, the airway tube defining a tab, the tab being disposed near the proximal end of the airway tube, the tab being disposed outside of the mouth of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location, the tab extending outwardly from the tube wall in a first direction when the cuff is at the inserted location, a second direction being perpendicular to a line extending from a nose of the patient to a chin of the patient, the first direction being transverse to the second direction;

B. inserting the cuff through the mouth of the patient to the inserted location;

C. inflating the cuff;

D. applying adhesive tape to the tab and to a head of the patient such that the tape biases the tab towards the head of the patient.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein applying adhesive tape comprises applying the tape to the tab and to a face of the patient such that the tape biases the tab towards the mouth of the patient.

25. A method according to claim 23, wherein applying adhesive tape also biases a distal end of the device against an esophageal sphincter of the patient.

26. A laryngeal mask airway device, comprising:

A. an inflatable cuff, the cuff defining a central opening at least when inflated, the cuff being insertable through a mouth of a patient to an inserted location within the patient, the cuff surrounding a glottic opening of the patient when inflated and at the inserted location;

B. an airway tube extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the airway tube defining an internal passage, a sealed airway passage extending from the proximal end of the tube through the internal passage to the glottic opening when the cuff is inflated and at the inserted location;

C. a flange fixed to the airway tube near the proximal end of the airway tube, the flange being disposed outside of the mouth of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location, the flange including a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the flange extending in a first direction outwardly from the tube, the second portion extending from the first portion at an angle with respect to the first portion, the angle being different than one hundred eighty degrees.

27. A laryngeal mask airway device, comprising:

A. an airway tube extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the airway tube defining an internal passage;

B. an inflatable cuff, the cuff defining a central opening at least when inflated, the cuff being disposed near the distal end of the airway tube, the cuff being insertable through a mouth of a patient to an inserted location within the patient, the cuff surrounding a glottic opening of the patient when inflated and at the inserted location, a

sealed airway passage extending from the proximal end of the tube through the internal passage to the glottic opening when the cuff is inflated and at the inserted location, the cuff defining an inner perimeter that bounds the central opening; and

C. an epiglottis support flange, the flange defining an outer perimeter and an inner perimeter, the flange comprising a solid sheet of material extending between the outer and inner perimeters of the flange, the outer perimeter of the flange being fixed to the inner perimeter of the cuff, the inner perimeter of the flange defining a single opening, the single opening being smaller than the central opening.

28. A device according to claim 27, the epiglottis support flange being part of the cuff.

29. A device according to claim 27, the device further including a tab fixed to the airway tube near the proximal end of the airway tube, the tab being disposed outside of the mouth of the patient when the cuff is at the inserted location, the tab extending outwardly from the airway tube in a first direction when the cuff is at the inserted location, a second direction being perpendicular to a line extending from a nose of the patient to a chin of the patient, the first direction being transverse to the second direction.

30. A device according to claim 29, a cross section of the airway tube being oblong.